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Camp Holy Cross in Goshen Announces Cancellation of 2020 Camp Season

GOSHEN, Mass., April 27, 2020 – Camp Holy Cross (CHC), a private summer camp operated by the Diocese of Springfield, has announced plans to cancel its 2020 camping season due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on the timing and uncertainty of impending Massachusetts Department of Public Health social distancing rules and regulations, CHC has decided to err on the side of caution for the health and safety of its campers and employees, according to Rev. Christopher Malatesta, pastor of St. Agnes Church and CHC co-director, and Justin Brown, co-director.

“It saddens me as a 25-year director of summer camps that we had to reach this decision,” said Rev. Malatesta. “Our wide-ranging programs, which focus on outdoor recreation and ministry, have been vital to the moral and physical development of Diocesan youth going

back decades. We regret that our campers and group users will miss out on unique life experiences that build trust, friendships, faith, and skills.”

CHC camps and summer programs involve children and young adults living in close proximity in cabins and most programs involve interaction in large group activities. “We are not sure what camp would look like with the implementation of social distancing norms and other potential regulations,” said Brown.

CHC typically opens Memorial Day weekend but Rev. Malatesta said stay-at-home orders and the closing of non-essential businesses including camps, pushed back the opening to the earliest June 29, thus failing to allow enough time to plan properly for the safety of campers and employees. There was also uncertainty regarding the licensing process. In early April, CHC communicated to participating groups that the most optimistic opening date would be July 1. “After further review of our options, we concluded that it would be in our best interest and that of our families and campers to not open at all,” explained Rev. Malatesta

The cancellation comes as a disappointment to families, campers, and group users who rely on Camp Holy Cross as a summer haven of fun and growth. The decision affects many other groups and diocesan programs that offer summer programming. “We know our decision to cancel affects many others and we hope they understand our position to close for the season,” said Brown.

Camp Holy Cross is home to many summer youth camps, group camping, and retreats. These include St. Agnes Bible Adventure, traditional overnight camps, and New Spirit weeks. Diocesan events include Enquentro retreats and El Camino family camping, scouting, marriage encounter, One in Christ family retreat, and other group activities and programs.

Rev. Malatesta said the camp's top priority has always been to put the health of its campers first. "We take great pride in providing safe camping experiences for many Diocesan youth and we will return to that mission when we reopen next season stronger than ever," he said.

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